

Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Studies Scholarships and Awards Policy

POLICY STATUS AND DETAILS

Policy Number	NAC11
Approving Authority	NIDA Board of Directors
Date Implemented	November 2024
Current Version	2.2
Date of Review	June 2027
Contact Officer	Director Learning and Innovation Scholarship Administrators
Related Policies, Procedures and Documents	NIDA Student Charter and Student Code of Conduct, Student Misconduct Policy, Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy

1. PURPOSE

NIDA recognises that due to the intensive nature of its courses and rising accommodation and other living costs in Sydney, some students experience financial challenges that pose a barrier to them committing to and succeeding in their studies. NIDA is committed to promoting and managing a scholarship program that provides assistance to eligible students to address financial barriers to their education. The purpose of this policy is to outline the governance arrangements for the establishment, administration and disbursement of scholarships and awards at NIDA.

2. SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all Scholarships and Awards governed by NIDA.

This policy does not have scope over external scholarships, bursaries, and awards, where there is an existing external procedure or governing body.

This policy applies to all students enrolled in accredited full-time and part-time Higher Education courses at NIDA.

Undergraduate Courses (BFAs)	Postgraduate Courses (MFAs)	Vocational Courses
		

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This policy sets out arrangements for:

- NIDA staff who manage and administer scholarships and awards,
- All students at NIDA who are studying in full-time higher education undergraduate or postgraduate courses,
- NIDA students in receipt of a scholarship or award.

3. PRINCIPLES

The following sets out the principles NIDA uses to give scholarships and awards:

- NIDA is committed to equity, inclusion, and transparency around the allocation of scholarships and awards.
- Continuing students must be of good standing to receive a scholarship or award.
- NIDA is proactive in growing the student scholarship and awards fund through donors/funding. This work is overseen by the Development team.
- Scholarships and awards will have defined published selection criteria.
- The Scholarship Committee (see attached Terms of Reference and Membership) will be established to undertake the formal selection process for scholarships and awards.

4. POLICY

General

- a. Scholarships and Awards will be established in accordance with the strategic interests of NIDA, with regard to the intent of the donor and in observance of the spirit of NIDA's access and inclusion policies and plans, anti-discrimination policies and relevant legislation.
- b. NIDA offers two types of Scholarships:
 - Life-changing Scholarships
 - Standard Scholarships
- c. Where appropriate, NIDA will acknowledge publicly scholarship and awards donations and benefactors on its website.
- d. NIDA will publish the eligibility criteria for its Scholarships and details of the application process on its website.
- e. The Scholarship and Award Committee respects the confidentiality of information supplied as part of an application for a scholarship or award. Prior consent will be granted for any public facing representation of students.
- f. The application, selection and award process for scholarships and awards will be fair, transparent, and equitable with a selection criterion that is objectively demonstrable and assessable.
- g. Donations, bequests, and monies contributed to the scholarship program are managed and distributed in a fiscally and ethically responsible manner.
- h. Students are made aware of the source of their scholarship and are required to:
 - Provide a letter of thanks.
 - Where appropriate engage with the donor to acknowledge their generosity.
 - Attend donors' events where appropriate and invited.

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Donors

- a. NIDA reserves the right to refuse a donation for a scholarship or award if NIDA considers the proposed terms to be unreasonable or association with the donor is not consistent with NIDA's vision and values.
- b. Donors will be made aware of the financial commitment involved in funding a scholarship/ award and advised to seek financial advice on tax implications.
- c. By signing an Agreement, the donor or sponsor acknowledges and agrees to their financial commitment any conditions or arrangements agreed.
- d. NIDA will appropriately acknowledge donors of scholarships and awards.
- e. Select donors and sponsors of Life Changing Scholarships will be invited to present their scholarship/award in person at a suitably convened NIDA event.
- f. Donor requests to name a scholarship or an award for the donor will be honoured when the scholarship is a minimum of \$5,000 or more. NIDA reserve the right to group smaller donations into larger scholarships to reflect student need and may choose not to name these for the donor, choosing instead to name them as a 'NIDA Scholarship, but still honouring any other conditions or criteria placed on the use of the donation The naming of these scholarships and awards should be in line with the NIDA Naming Policy.
- g. The naming convention for scholarships will be the donor's name or the donor's preferred scholarship name and the word "Scholarship". In the case of a single donor providing more than one (1) scholarship for different disciplines, the naming convention will be the "(donor's name) Scholarship for (insert specific field)".
- h. The naming convention for Awards will be the donor's name or the donor's preferred award name. In the case of a single donor providing more than one (1) award for different disciplines, the naming convention will be the "(donor's name) Award for (insert specific field)".
- i. Scholarships must be used as per the intention of the donor and their funding guidelines. The recipient's standing is consistent with the purposes and conditions of the grant.

Scholarship and Awards Committee

The NIDA Scholarship and Awards Committee is established to discuss new scholarships, agree on appropriate selection criteria, oversee the administration of scholarships and review student academic progress in receipt of Scholarships. The membership and terms of reference for the Scholarship and Awards Committee is provided in Appendix 1.

The Scholarship and Awards Committee will report as follows:

- a. Allocation of funds detailing students in receipt of Scholarships and Awards to Academic Board (Learning and Innovation Manager).
- b. Academic Progress of students in receipt of Scholarships and Awards to Academic Board (Learning and Innovation Manager).
- c. Fund raising achievements to NIDA Board of Directors (Development Manager)
- d. Financial Reporting to NIDA Board of Directors (Development Manager)

Awarding and Withdrawing Scholarships

- a. Only full-time and part-time HE students who are Australian or New Zealand citizens, or Australian Permanent Resident visa holders, in accredited higher education are eligible to receive a Scholarship.
- b. Scholarship recipients are to be selected on an objective, non-discriminatory and transparent basis.
- c. Students whose study load is reduced from a standard progression will have their scholarship suspended until such time as they return to full-time study.

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- d. The Scholarship fund is finite. Scholarship funding decisions will consider the scholarship fund available, donor stipulated criteria, the means assessment and the pre-determined criteria used by the Committee to arrive at funding decisions.
- e. Applications must be formally submitted online by the published deadline. Late applications will not be considered unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- f. The Scholarship and Award Committee accept the financial information provided in Scholarship applications in good faith. Should the financial circumstances of a student be found to be better than described a scholarship for financial assistance may be withdrawn.
- g. During an academic year, students whose academic load has dropped below 75% of their study requirements are determined to no longer be of good standing and will have their scholarship withdrawn.
- h. Where a scholarship recipient withdraws from their course prior to the end of an academic year no further payments will be made and the scholarship for financial assistance will be withdrawn.
- i. Scholarship funds freed up because of academic suspensions or withdrawals will be returned to the Scholarship and Awards funding pot and reallocated to a new student either as a new scholarship or reallocated via the Hardship funding process detailed in 6.5 below. Records of scholarship and any subsequent withdrawal are maintained by the Scholarship Team within the Directorate of Learning and Innovation.
- j. The Scholarship Team will work with the Development Team as required to prepare Scholarship and Awards reports for the NIDA Executive, Academic Board, NIDA Board of Directors, the NIDA Foundation Trust and Donors.

Hardship Funds

- a. A small portion of the Scholarship fund is ring-fenced by the Scholarship and Awards Committee annually to support students who may experience financial hardship during the academic year. Each 'hardship' case will be assessed individually by the Scholarship and Awards Committee based on the evidence provided at a specially convened meeting.

Awards

- a. The establishment of an award requires:
 - equitable and transparent selection criteria, and
 - approval by the Scholarship and Award Committee before it is awarded.
- b. The Scholarship and Award Committee will convene to determine the merit of all nominations.
- c. In addition to award specific conditions, the following general conditions apply:
 - Notwithstanding that a candidate meets the criteria, an award is awarded only if, in the opinion of the Scholarships and Award Committee for the selection of the awardee, there is a candidate of sufficient merit.
 - Unless a testator (for bequests) or donor of the funds from which the award is funded has expressly directed otherwise:
 - o an award is granted annually, where funding permits.
 - o an award is not granted to the same student twice; and
 - o where the offer of an award lapses or is not granted for any reason, the unused award money is either, re-capitalised in accordance with any external conditions or mandates (for endowed awards); or the funds are held over to the following year or the donor is contacted to see if a reconsideration of discipline or identification category is possible (for non-permanent awards).
 - The selection and award process for awards will be equitable with a selection criterion that is objectively demonstrable and assessable.

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- The offer of an award lapses if it is not claimed by the recipient within 12 months of being awarded.
- If there is a tie between two or more for a monetary award, the award is shared, unless its specific conditions indicate otherwise.

d. The recipients of awards are recorded and filed in NIDA's records system in accordance with NIDA's privacy policy.

4. SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION CRITERIA, REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION AND PROMOTING EQUITY IN THE PROCESS

Application process

- Scholarships and their associated criteria and application form will be published on the NIDA website and students will apply via a formal online application process.
- The Scholarship and Award Committee will convene to determine the merit of all submitted applications.
- The application, selection and award process for scholarships and awards will be fair, transparent and equitable with a selection criterion that is objectively demonstrable and assessable.
- Scholarships recipients are to be selected on an objective, non-discriminatory and transparent basis, and based on the below criteria that are appropriate to accomplishing the purpose of a scholarship as described by the donor's charitable aim.
- Awards and their amounts will be granted at the comparative and competitive discretion of the selection panel, considering academic/artistic merit and other circumstances as detailed in the selection criteria agreed by the Committee.

Equity in the scholarship application review and interview process

- The NIDA scholarship allocation process prioritises equity. That is, we consider that students require different levels of support based on the different barriers to access that they may face.
- Equity is different to treating everyone equally. Equity recognises that people do not exist on an equal playing field, encompassing different experiences, privileges, and barriers. Our scholarship allocation process therefore acknowledges the different barriers to access experienced by applicants, and the need to tailor our support to this difference.
- Based on research and understanding of the socioeconomic barriers to access and participation, the NIDA Scholarship Committee has developed a system for measuring applicants' barriers to study at NIDA.
- NIDA's scholarship process also considers intersectionality, where a single applicant may experience several different intersecting barriers that compound and render access and participation even more difficult.
- Barriers include:
 - Financial disadvantage, where applicants facing financial hardship due to socioeconomic conditions may struggle with the cost of living while studying full time.
 - Cultural background, where non-white applicants are at a disadvantage due to the historical and systemic marginalisation of non-white people in the Australian creative industries and tertiary education sector.
 - Disability, where people with disability, d/Deaf and disabled people, neurodivergent people, face significant barriers in accessing education and work in the creative industries.
 - Geography, where people who live outside of Australia's major cities experience significant cost barriers and lack of physical access to NIDA's educational offerings. Our consideration of geography

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also includes places in Australia where people are more likely to experience socioeconomic disadvantage – places such as Western Sydney.

- Gender, where women and gender diverse people face social barriers and disadvantage based on systemic exclusion and perceptions of their gender.

Eligibility criteria and required documentation

- a. The Scholarship and Awards Committee will review the eligibility Criteria and associated documentation required to be submitted with a Scholarship application annually.

5. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Award	A gift of money, services, opportunity, or tangible items awarded to a student for achievement in a particular area of endeavor
Bursary	A monetary award made by any educational institution or funding authority to individuals or groups.
Criteria	A principle or standard by which something may be judged or decided.
Donor	An organization or individual/s who give money or benefit for the use of students. These individuals may be involved in establishing criteria or nominate the sector
Good Standing	A student is of good standing if they have complied with all their explicit obligations as a student and have not been subject to any serious form of sanction or disciplinary action for misconduct.
Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Studies	Denotes the level of study scholarships and awards apply to and includes all Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Master of Fine Arts (MFA) and relevant Diploma Level Vocational Studies courses (subject to funds) offered by NIDA delivered full-time and part-time.
Means tested	A determination of whether an individual qualifies for financial or government assistance.
Misconduct	Any behavior/s that do not comply with the NIDA Code of Conduct, Student Charter or any of the other NIDA Student Policies and Procedures or the laws of the land.

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NIDA Code of Conduct	Framework outlining the rights and responsibilities of all members of the NIDA community in terms of behavior whilst at NIDA, working for NIDA or involved in NIDA related activities offsite.
NIDA Student Charter	A document that establishes the expectations for student conduct. It includes the NIDA Code of Conduct.
Scholarship	A (means tested) grant of money that can be applied for by a student in an accredited course to assist with living costs, relocation costs or accommodation expenses and support the them whilst they are engaged in full time study and course fees.

6. CHANGE HISTORY

Date	Change Description	Reason for Change	Author	Version
August 2026	Update reference to Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy	New Policy	Head of Quality and Compliance	2.2
December 2025	Editorial update to review date and policy titles	Revised policy review schedule approved by Academic Board October 2025	Academic Compliance Manager	2.1
15/07/2024	Amendments	Updated policy	Director, Learning and Innovation	2.0
13/02/2020	Creation	New policy	Director SELQA & Strategy and Development	1.0

7. CONSULTATION/BENCHMARKING

Benchmarked against policies and practice from a number of higher education providers and other sources.

Relevant policy documents from the following are gratefully acknowledged:

- Macquarie University
- University of Southern Queensland
- Charles Darwin University
- The University of Western Australia
- Universities Admissions Centre
- The University of Sydney
- Arts Access Australia

Consultation: Equity & Inclusion and Development Teams Legislation and Regulatory Frameworks	Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Disability Standards for Education 2005 Taxation Administration Regulations 1976 (Commonwealth) Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth) Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
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Appendix 1: Scholarship and Awards Committee

1. Membership

- Director, Learning & Innovation (Chair)
- Development Manager
- Director of First Nations or appointed representative
- Equity and Inclusion Manager
- Learning and Innovation Manager

To be quorate, a minimum of three members are required.

2. In Attendance

- Course Leaders as required to offer insight into specific students applying for scholarship.
- Scholarship and Admissions Officer
- Finance Manager
- External Donors (at their request)

3. Terms of Reference

- a. To review and establish selection criteria and priorities for scholarship funds distribution annually.
- b. To review Scholarship applications based on the available scholarship fund using agreed criteria.
- c. Make decisions on Scholarship allocations, taking into account any conditions and criteria placed on funding by Donors.
- d. To monitor academic standing of students in receipt of scholarships and determine appropriate course of action in instances where students are at risk of academic failure, have deferred or suspended studies or have withdrawn or have had their enrolment cancelled.
- e. To report allocation of scholarship funding to Academic Board, NIDA Board of Directors, NIDA Foundation and other committees as requested.
- f. To ensure a Scholarship fund allocation/withdrawal register is maintained.
- g. To review and determine a course of action of funds freed up as a result of academic suspensions or withdrawals.
- h. To ensure relevant criteria is in place to assess students/ graduates being considered for an award.
- i. To ensure that all conditions of making an award are met.
- j. To approve a recommendation of an award based on agreed criteria.
- k. To consider individual applications for hardship funding.
- l. To approve applications for hardship funding.

